

Jamie Skiba
67 Parkwood Drive
East Hartford, CT 06118

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Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator Catherine Osten, Senator Paul Formica, and Representative Toni Walker,

My name is Jamie Skiba, a resident of East Hartford. My daughter attends the Glastonbury-East Hartford Magnet School (GEHMS) in Glastonbury, which is part of the CREC magnet school system. I am writing to ask you to please support the continued funding for our magnet schools.

We are proud to be a part of the CREC family knowing that our children will receive an excellent academic and social education through their elementary and high school years. Our CREC PK4 student is reading 20+ words, knows how to write the lower case letters, recognizes opportunities for and completes simple math problems, voluntarily practices Chinese, and asks questions that demonstrate forward thinking; but most importantly, GEHMS taught my daughter how it is possible to love school and appreciate people of a variety of backgrounds. After one month at GEHMS, my daughter now not only likes school but loves it! The summer was tough as she counted down the weeks to return despite that she was not bored!

We value the culturally diverse student body with a curriculum focused on math and science and at a Connecticut Green LEAF-certified school for its health incentives.

We enthusiastically look forward to our subsequent years at GEHMS:

- * Engaging Assemblies where school rules are emphasized, using Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports (PBIS). It was not until I attended an assembly that I understood why my daughter was so excited for these sessions that stress school expectations, another GEHMS activity that is both engaging and resourceful

- * Second Step Program: "Based on over 20 years of research and classroom application, the award-winning Second Step program integrates academics and social and emotional learning. Children from preschool through eighth grade learn and practice important skills like anger management, cooperation, respectful behavior, and problem solving." Our family is able to use the coaching tools at home, too!

- * Community snack policy is free of high fructose corn syrup, hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils, artificial dyes and flavors

- * The cafeteria offerings are free of artificial dyes and flavors

- * Morning running club before school begins

- * Attentive and responsive leadership team

- * Family Fitness Fun Nights

- * Chinese studies starting in PK. Our daughter loves singing in Chinese!

- * Dedicated science instructor

- * Specials: Chinese, Music, Technology, Library, Art, PE

- * Magnetic Attractions, afterschool extracurricular activities program hosted by school families and teachers

- * The involved community makes GEHMS feel like an extended family

I am asking the legislature to follow through on its promise to invest in the future of *all* students. Magnet schools have a successful track record of closing the achievement gap and providing all students a chance not only to succeed but also to thrive.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jamie Skiba